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## Viewing cable 09LIMA1659, Sendero Luminoso: Incremental Gains in Mixed Picture

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### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09LIMA1659**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">09LIMA1659</a>	<a href="#">2009-11-19 18:50</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL//NOFORN</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Lima</a>

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2011/05/09/113919/wikileaks-us-saw-israeli-firms.html>

VZCZCXYZ0018  
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHPE #1659/01 3231850  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 191850Z NOV 09  
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0120  
INFO RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION  
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0052  
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO  
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA  
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO  
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 001659

SIPDIS  
NOFORN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019/11/19  
TAGS: [PTER](#) [SNAR](#) [SOCI](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [PE](#)

SUBJECT: Sendero Luminoso: Incremental Gains in Mixed Picture

REF: LIMA 1209; LIMA 1299 AND PREVIOUS; LIMA 1647; LIMA 1653

CLASSIFIED BY: P. Michael McKinley, Ambassador; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

¶1. (C) Summary. Most analysts believe Sendero Luminoso (SL) insurgents are making incremental gains in the Apurimac-Ene River Valley (VRAE). Local observers in Ayacucho say frustrations with government at every level have strengthened the anti-system opposition and in some cases generated sympathy for SL. In the most recent incident, SL elements attacked a provisional military base in the VRAE on November 5, killing one soldier and injuring four others. According to senior-level GOP officials, quashing SL in the VRAE remains a top government priority, and recent efforts include signing a \$9 million contract with an Israeli defense specialist. Several SL members have expressed interest in participating in elections, but most politicians still see an association with the organization as a kiss of death. End summary.

#### SL Expanding Influence in Ayacucho

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¶2. (C) While there have been fewer casualties in the VRAE this year so far than last, according to Peruvian military sources, most analysts believe SL in the VRAE and environs is a growing threat. For one, the terrorist group has likely gained firepower over the past several years, fueled mostly by weapons stolen from security forces in recent attacks (refs). Observers have also told us SL's VRAE faction is particularly dangerous now because of its deceptive tactics. Whereas SL in the 80s was often gruesomely violent with villagers and grassroots organizations, today's incarnation now actively befriends and financially supports communities, in some cases seeking to supplant a state that has abandoned them. Several contacts in Ayacucho (where SL founder Abimael Guzman was a university professor) recently told us that Jose's "proseguir" faction in the VRAE has successfully branded itself as a kinder, gentler group, and is at least tacitly accepted by rural communities and by the very self-defense committees that played a pivotal role in the original SL's defeat.

¶3. (C) During a recent visit to Ayacucho, local contacts told us that general discontent and disillusionment with the government, and a particular distaste for the ruling APRA party, had expanded and deepened popular sympathy for "anti-system" alternatives. In some cases, movements that have espoused or used violence such as the "Etnocaceristas" (headed by Antauro Humala, who is currently serving a 25 year prison sentence for instigating a 2005 armed uprising in Andahuaylas) and SL itself have benefited from these anti-government sentiments. Several contacts told us that when Guzman's attorney Alfredo Crespo visited Ayacucho in September to tout Guzman's recently published book, he was warmly received by local radio stations, print media and university student groups. Others told us that pervasive corruption amongst local politicians made some people feel nostalgia for the days when SL would kill corrupt politicians as a warning to others. Several observers said that, with education, health, and employment opportunities sorely lacking, disgruntled locals willingly joined local defense fronts - whose leaders often have ideological ties with SL - in strikes and protests. In addition, jobless youth from the highlands frequently work stints as "burriers" for drug traffickers, who are deeply intertwined with SL in the VRAE.

#### November 5 Attack

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¶4. (C) The most recent VRAE attack occurred on November 5, when one soldier was killed and four others wounded during a four-hour assault by Shining Path (SL) terrorists on a provisional military base located where the Vizcatan and Mantaro rivers meet. SL forces were repelled after attempting to overrun the base, which was

manned by 45 soldiers from the 2nd Infantry Brigade. According to VRAE Military Region sources, the SL's motive was probably to obtain more weapons, and reflected "desperation" because it had been unable to dislodge any of the temporary military bases set up in the VRAE since Operation Excellence 777 began in August 2008. Other observers maintained that the Government's recently expanded rewards campaign for capturing SL leaders "Jose" in the VRAE and "Artemio" in the Upper Huallaga Valley (UHV) - the bounty on both their heads was increased from 500K to 1 million soles (roughly USD 350K) -- may have also played a part in SL's belligerence. One prominent analyst, however, suggested that SL attacks on relatively fortified military bases rather than security patrols or helicopters vulnerable to ambush indicate SL was increasingly well equipped and regaining strength.

#### VRAE Remains Top Focus

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15. (C) According to senior GOP officials, quashing SL in the VRAE remains a top government priority. Defense Minister Rey has emphasized his intention to refocus Peru's security efforts on the internal threat. Media reports have alluded to the imminent purchase of several combat-capable helicopters (the armed forces only have about half a dozen operational helicopters, having lost two in the last few months [refs]), suitable for operations in the VRAE. According to government and congressional sources, the MOD is close to obtaining around USD 130 million from the Ministry of the Economy for VRAE operations. In a recent conversation with the Ambassador, FM Garcia Belaunde said that, notwithstanding tensions with Chile and an announced U.S. arms sales, the VRAE would remain Peru's central security focus. The GOP's efforts have even included signing a reported one year, \$9 million contract with former Israeli Brigadier General Israel Baruch Ziv, who promised to help Peru defeat SL in the VRAE once and for all. According to media sources, Ziv will focus on training for elite special operations forces, strengthening intelligence networks, while Peruvian joint forces will prioritize the killing or capture of SL leaders rather than control of territory.

#### SL in Politics

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16. (C) Current and former SL members have expressed interest in participating in elections, but most politicians and parties still see any alliance or association with SL as politically toxic. We have heard that Guzman's attorney has publicly stated that SL would seek to participate in the 2010 regional and 2011 national elections. Guzman's partner and imprisoned SL leader, Elena Iparraguirre, publicly reiterated SL's interest, and even named Cajamarca priest, environmental activist and probable presidential aspirant Marco Arana as a possible political ally. (Arana quickly distanced himself publicly from Iparraguirre and SL.) Similarly, a controversy broke out after Elsa Malpartida, Andean Community parliamentarian representing Humala's Nationalist Party (PNP), was reported to have belonged to SL in the 1980s. Malpartida publicly argued that, like others in Peru's rural areas, she had been forced to cooperate with SL and had formally severed her ties long ago. Government officials, including Justice Minister Aurelio Pastor, have publicly stated that SL would be prohibited from participating in the political process because it remained a terrorist organization that consciously used violence for political ends.

#### Comment: The Chile Distraction

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17. (C) One problem with the continuing spy controversy that has roiled relations between Peru and Chile (refs) is that political calculations might compel the GOP to turn its attention (and resources) away from the country's real and immediate internal

threat: the potentially reemerging SL terrorist threat and unchecked drug trafficking interests, particularly in the VRAE. So far, our Peruvian counterparts have assured us this will not happen.

MCKINLEY